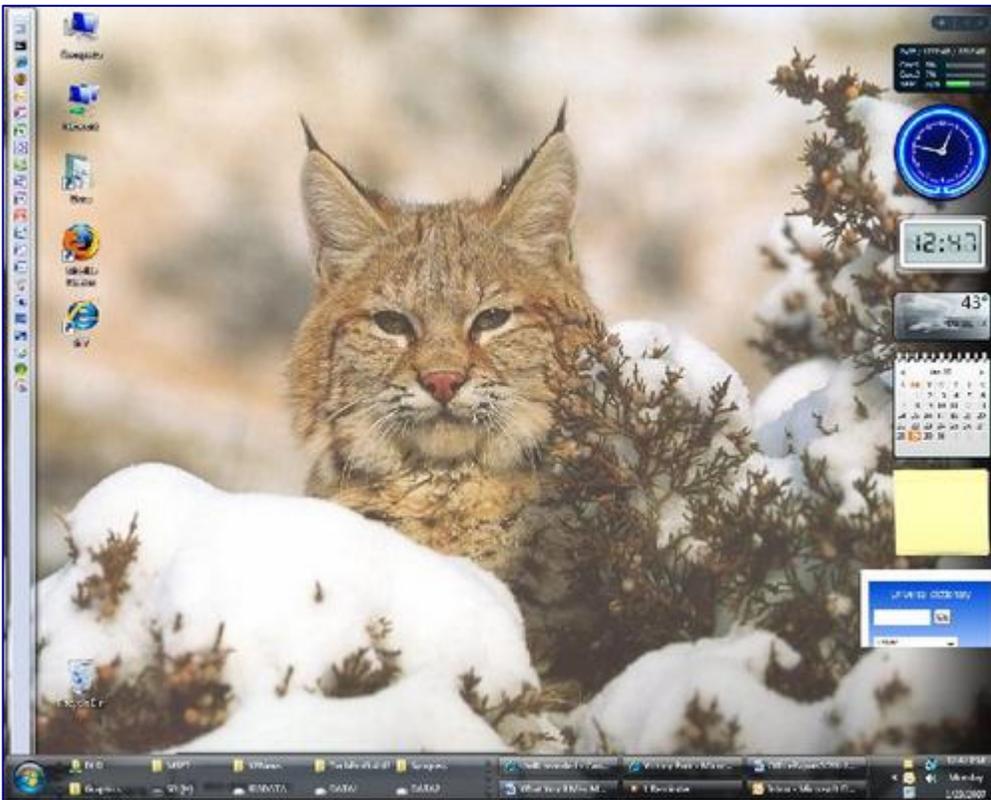**By Debra Littlejohn Shinder, MCSE, MVP**

Windows Vista has lots of cool new features, eye candy, and security enhancements we didn't have with Windows XP. But as with any software upgrade, there are also some missing pieces—features or capabilities you may find yourself wishing for after the upgrade. Luckily, in many cases you can get back what's missing with a simple download, a registry edit, or an "undocumented" technique. After I switched to Vista fulltime as my primary operating system, I missed several things. Here's how I got some of them back and worked around others.

#1: Why can't I separate my toolbars anymore?

One of the first things I do when I set up a new operating system for daily use is configure the desktop to suit my working habits. For years, that has included dragging the Quick Launch bar off of the main taskbar and docking it vertically on one side of my screen. That gives me more room for the open program icons on the taskbar and more room to place program icons on the Quick Launch bar for easy and fast access.

In the first few Vista betas, I found that I was unable to move the taskbar or separate its sections, even after unlocking it. I figured it was a "beta thing" and would be fixed in the final version. Imagine my surprise to discover, after installing the RTM, that I could now move the entire taskbar to the side of the screen, but there was no way to detach the Quick Launch bar, no matter how hard I tried. A little research revealed that this was no oversight, but instead is a new "feature" designed to prevent the problem of people inadvertently separating the toolbars. Ouch! Apparently the thinking at Microsoft is that the Start Menu Search box substitutes for the QL bar. Well, not for me.

Figure A: You can create a separate Quick Launch toolbar by dragging the folder to the edge of the desktop.

Thank goodness I found a way to get my Quick Launch bar back where it's supposed to be:

1. In Windows Explorer, browse to the Quick Launch folder (typically Application Data\Microsoft\Internet Explorer). Vista's Start menu search feature makes it easy to find: Just type *Quick Launch* in the box.

2. Drag the Quick Launch folder to the edge of your desktop. It creates a toolbar there. You'll probably want to right-click and select View | Small Icons to make it look better.

You can do this with any folder to create a toolbar of its contents. **Figure A** shows my Vista desktop, with the detached QL bar holding shortcuts to my favorite programs. I closed the QL bar on the Vista taskbar and created a custom toolbar there for accessing frequently used folders and drives.

#2: Text-based Setup is gone

Okay, this isn't something anyone's likely to spend a lot of time mourning, but for those of us who have been installing Windows operating systems for years, the lack of "part one" of the Setup process, featuring white text on a blue background, is definitely a difference. The Vista installation program is graphical from the very beginning—and it's pretty, in keeping with the visual "wow" factor that Microsoft was aiming for with Vista.

#3: What's happened to my favorite third-party programs?

I created the custom toolbar for my folders and drives because I found I wasn't able to use the PowerDesk 5.0 toolbar I'd been using in Windows XP, which had a section for such shortcuts. PowerDesk itself installed on Vista and worked fine, but when I tried to create or open a toolbar, I got the error message shown in **Figure B**.

Older versions of many programs won't work in Vista, but many software vendors are bringing out new versions that do, or releasing updates to make their programs Vista-capable.

In some cases, you can get the old programs to install or run by running the installation file or the installed program in Compatibility mode. To do so:

Figure B: Some programs, or parts of programs, such as the PowerDesk toolbar, don't work in Vista.
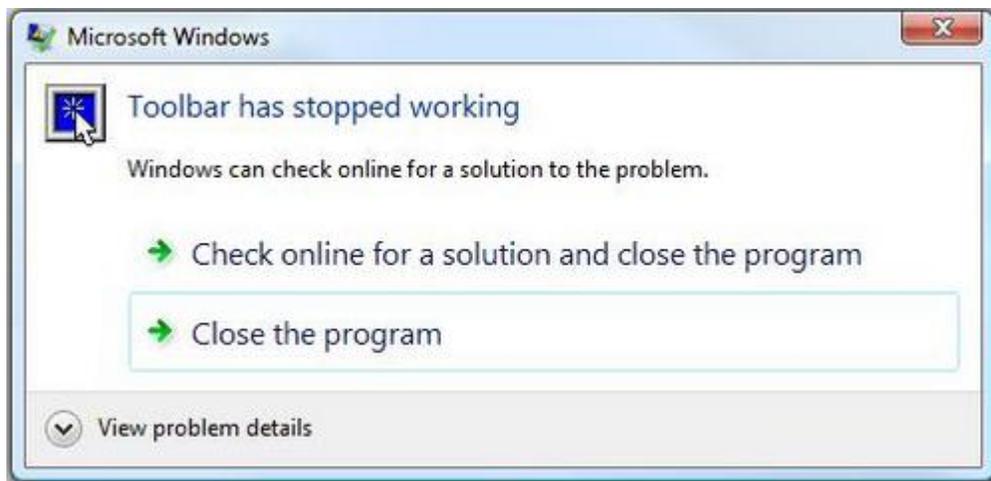
1. In Windows Explorer, navigate to the installation file or the program executable.

2. Right-click and select Properties.

3. Click the Compatibility tab.

4. Select the Run This Program In Compatibility Mode For check box and choose the operating system you were previously running it on from the drop-down list (for example, Windows XP (Service Pack 2).

5. You may also need to check the box to run the program as an administrator.

If it still doesn't work, you can try adjusting the settings for running the program (color depth and resolution) or disable visual themes, desktop composition, and/or display scaling.
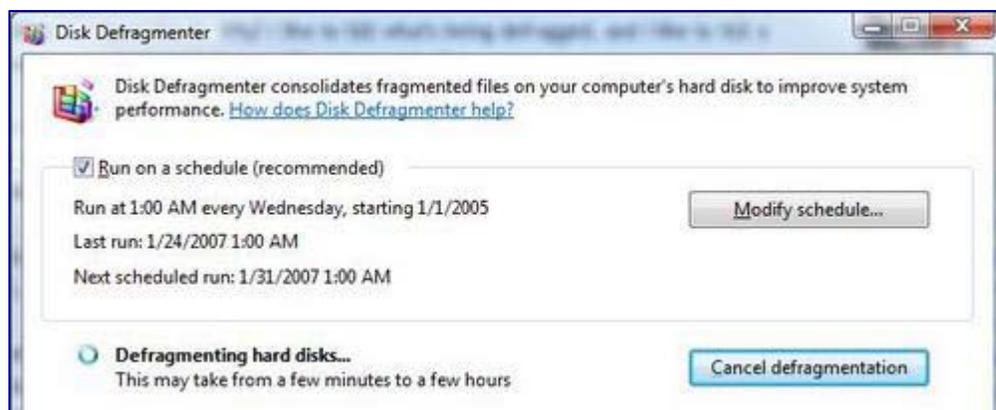
Another program you might have been running in XP that has problems with Vista is the Diskeeper defragmentation software. This brings us to the next MIA feature, which is the reason some of you might want to run a third-party defrag utility.

#4: Where did the Defrag progress bars go?

The Vista Defrag utility now has a scheduler feature, something users have been asking for, but not everyone likes the simplicity of the new Defragmenter interface and the fact that there are no progress indicators. (See the view of a defragmentation in progress in **Figure C**.)
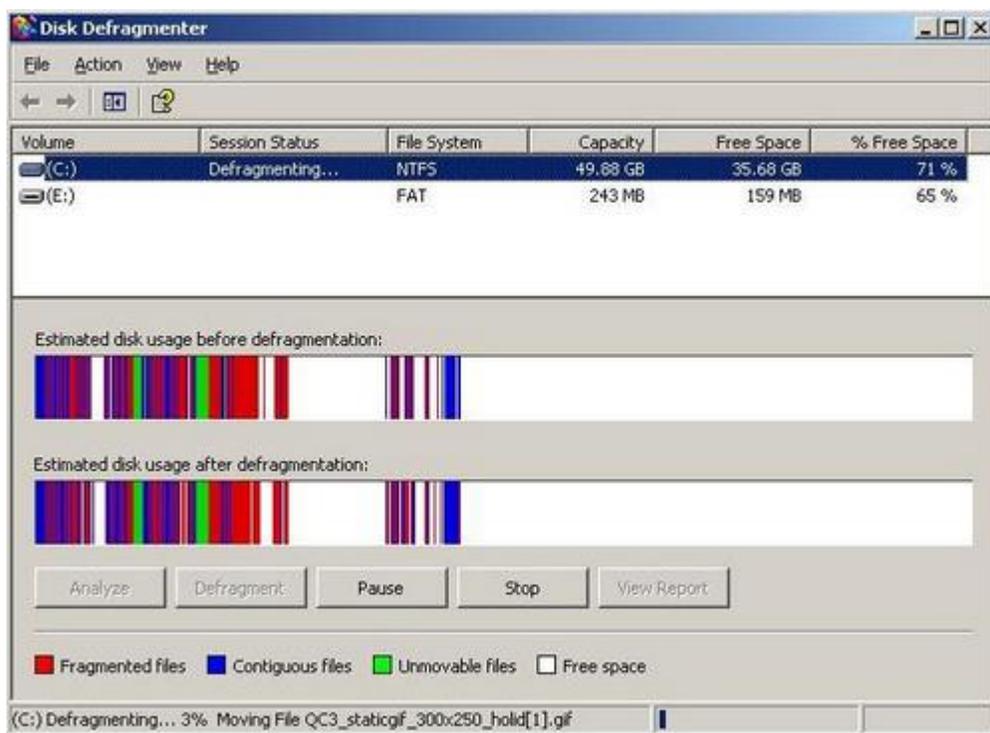

Figure C: The new Disk Defragmenter GUI does away with the progress indicators.

Figure D shows the old XP Defragmenter interface, which some folks are longing for.

The good news is that for those who want to use a third-party defrag utility, there's now a free update for Diskeeper 2007 that's compatible with Vista. See the January 22 post on the Diskeeper Weblog for information about how to get it. Other third-party defragmenters also work with Vista. Raxco's PerfectDisk has a free trial of its Vista-compatible beta (version 8).

Figure D: The XP Defragmentation interface graphically indicates the progress of the process.

#5: Why is it so much harder to use multiple monitors?

It took me longer than it otherwise would have to embrace Vista wholeheartedly because of problems I had with multiple monitor support. I started using multiple monitors regularly back with Windows 2000, although it was sometimes a bit of a hassle to get it configured on a new computer.

Windows XP perfected multi-monitor support. It became truly plug and play; I could throw two or three video cards into a computer's PCI slots, plug in my monitors, and XP recognized them almost every time.

Figure E: Vista still supports multiple monitors, but it's not the no brainer it was in XP.

Then along came Vista. When I installed it on my XP machine that was running four monitors, two off an ATI x600 PCIe card and two off a Matrox 450G PCI card, I got the Aero Glass interface on the first two (ATI), and nothing—black screen—on the second pair (Matrox). Research showed the Matrox card wasn't Vista capable, so I bought a card that, according to advertising, was: a GeForce 5200. Still no joy; still no third screen.

Finally, [documentation became available on the Microsoft site](#) indicating that to run Aero Glass on multiple video cards, they must use the same WDDM driver. If you have two Aero-capable cards that use different WDDM drivers (e.g., an ATI card and an nVidia card), Vista will disable one of them. It turns out that it *is* possible to use the cards together with the older XPDM drivers, but you don't get the Glass interface and associated Vista eye candy. Now I have three monitors working fine on my Vista machine, with a GeForce 7900 card paired up with the GeForce 5200. **Figure E** shows my setup.

Multiple monitor support still isn't as stable in Vista as it was in XP. Even with the RTM, I occasionally turn on my system to find that my monitors have mysteriously "switched places" in the operating system's eyes. That is, my taskbar and sidebar have moved from my middle monitor to the right side monitor, which now thinks it's the primary monitor. It's a quick fix in the Display Properties dialog box, shown in **Figure F**, but it's an annoyance. I miss XP's user-transparent support of multiple monitors.

#6: Where's Windows Messenger?

XP came with Windows Messenger installed. Vista doesn't—but the Start menu does contain a link to the download page for Windows Live Messenger. Some folks may be annoyed at having to download and install the program (especially those who are restricted from installing programs), but this is probably a good idea for a couple of reasons:
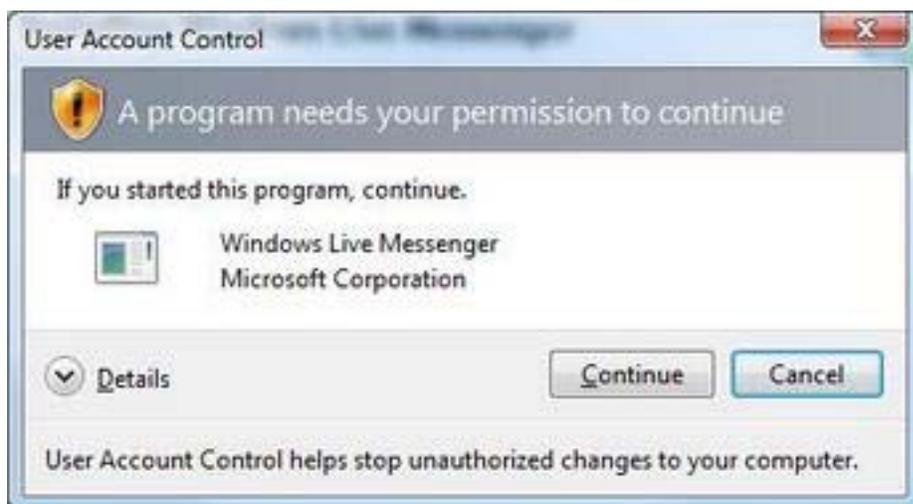
- It makes it easier for network administrators to keep users from chatting online, if your company's policies don't allow that.

- It ensures that you'll get the most updated version of the Messenger program no matter when you install the operating system.

Figure F: Vista occasionally "forgets" which monitor I've designated as the main monitor.

#7: Why is the new security system nagging me all the time?

Probably the most-missed characteristic of XP is its more demure behavior. If you were logged on as an administrator and you decided to install a program or perform some other administrative task, XP didn't question your decision. Vista's security is more in your face—even admins will encounter the User Account Control "nag box," shown in **Figure G**.
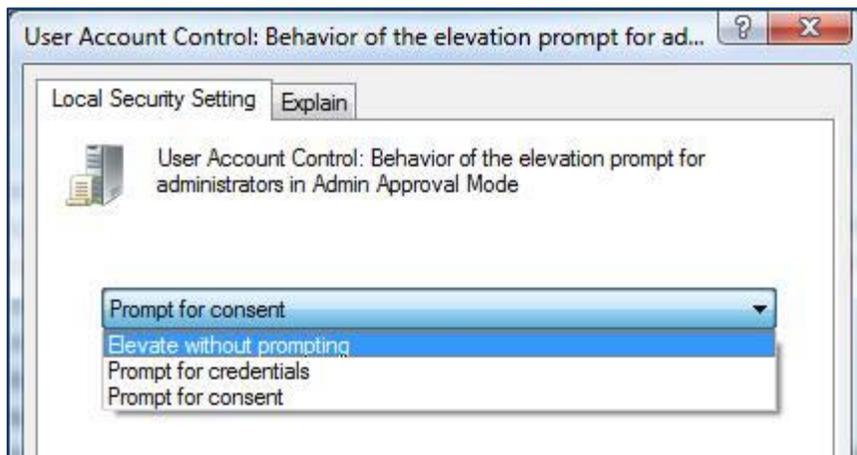

Figure G: XP didn't argue with you when you wanted to install a program.

Vista's best-kept secret: It's possible to turn off the User Account Control feature—but it's not recommended. UAC takes some of the risk out of logging on with an administrative account, and if you regularly do so, you should let Vista protect you. That said, if you really want to get rid of those nag screens, here's how:

1. In the Administrative Tools menu of Control Panel, select Local Security Policy.

2. When prompted, click Continue.

3. In the left pane, expand Local Policies and click Security Options.

4. In the right pane, scroll down to User Account Control: Behavior Of The Elevation Prompt For Administrators In Admin Approval Mode and double-click it.

5. In the drop-down box on the Local Security Settings tab, select Elevate Without Prompting, as shown in **Figure H**.
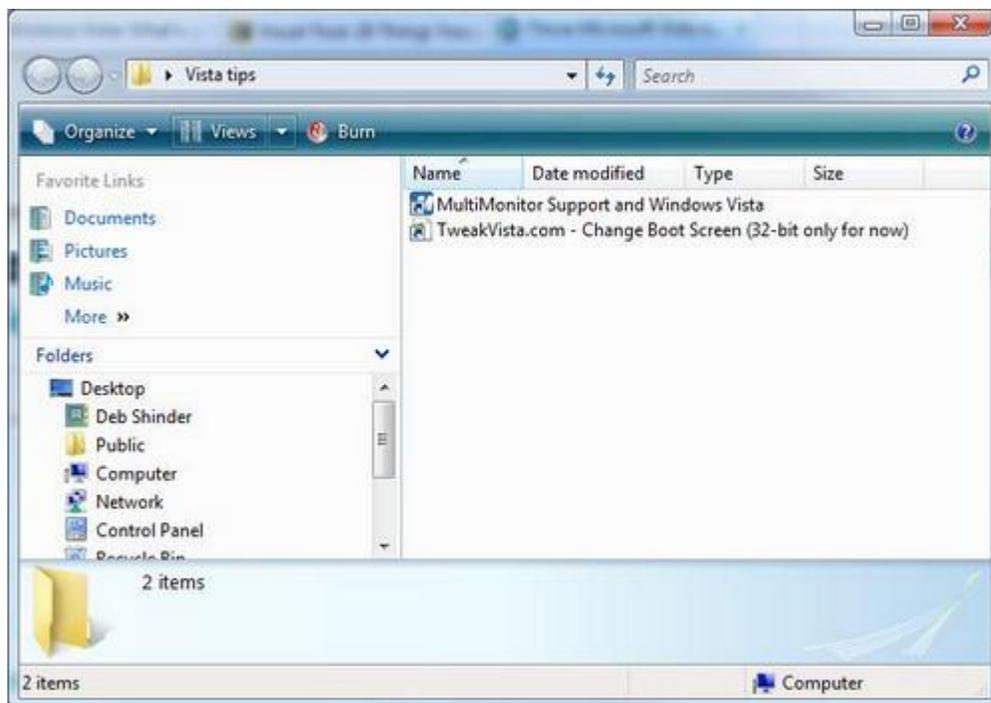
6. Click OK.

Figure H: You can configure Vista not to prompt administrators for permission when performing admin tasks.

Tip

You can modify a number of security behaviors via the Local Security Settings console. For example, I had to disable the policy User Account Control: Switch To The Secure Desktop When Prompting For Elevation to get a screenshot of the elevation prompt dialog box shown in Figure G. By default, the secure desktop prevents any other programs from interacting when this dialog box is being displayed.
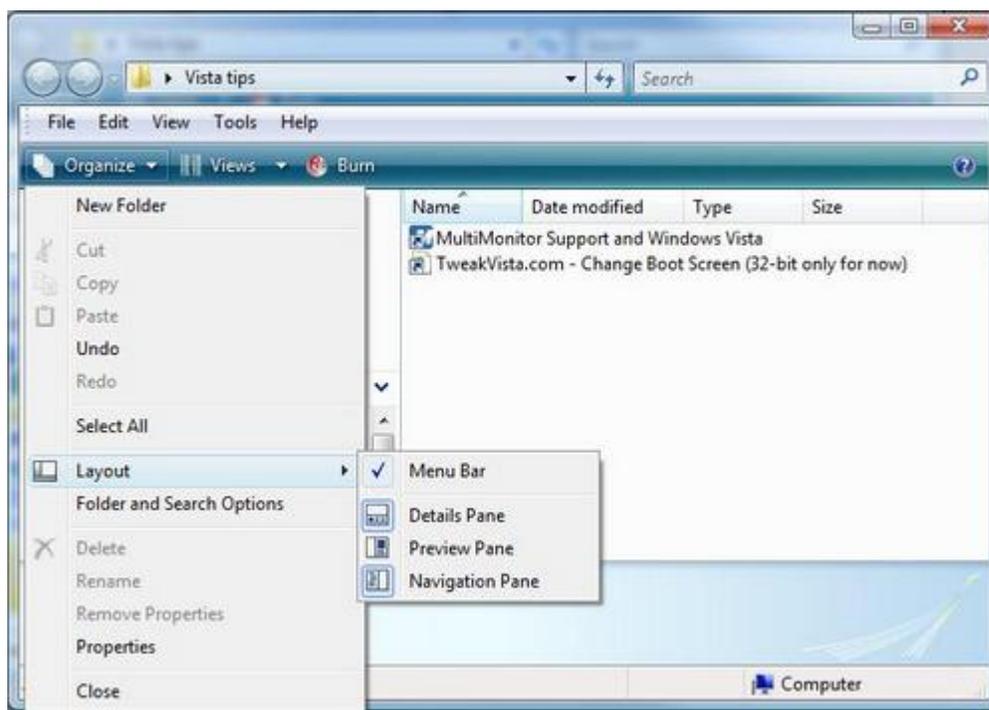
#8: Windows Explorer looks different

The first time you open Windows Explorer, you may be a little disconcerted by the new look. In particular, you're likely to miss the old familiar menu bar, the one that says File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, Help. In fact, you may find it a little difficult to get around without it. **Figure I** shows the new Explorer.

Figure I: The top menu bar in Windows Explorer appears to have gone missing.

This one is an easy fix: Just click the down arrow on the Organize button, select Layout, and then click Menu Bar. A check mark there means your old friend the menu bar is back at the top of the window, right where it belongs, as shown in **Figure J**.

Figure J: You can get the menu bar back with a few quick clicks of your mouse.

#9: What's up with the Up button?

Another difference in Windows Explorer is the missing Up button. This has been replaced by the Back button—but that takes you back to where you started, not necessarily to the top level of the path you're in. It would have been nice to have both.

In most cases, you can work around this by using the new clickable folder path. Now you can click at any level of the path shown in the top address/navigation bar. You can also click the down arrows beside each level and see a clickable list of all the files and folders contained at that level.

In addition, you can use the Recent Pages button, which is a small down arrow located between the back and forward buttons and the address bar, to display locations to or through which you've recently navigated. This is a great help in finding your way around the file system.

#10: Vista requires too many clicks

Many new Vista users have complained that some operations now require more clicks to complete than they did in XP. For example, in XP you could right-click the Network icon on the desktop and select Properties to see a list of your network connections.

In Vista, that same right-click selection displays the Network And Sharing Center, shown in **Figure K**. An extra click is required to get to the list of network connections. You must select Manage Network Connections in the left Tasks pane.

If getting to the network connections list quickly is an issue, you can easily create a shortcut to it by dragging its icon to the desktop (**Figure L**) or Quick Launch bar, giving you access with one click instead of two.

Figure K: Some users miss being able to access the list of network connections with two clicks.
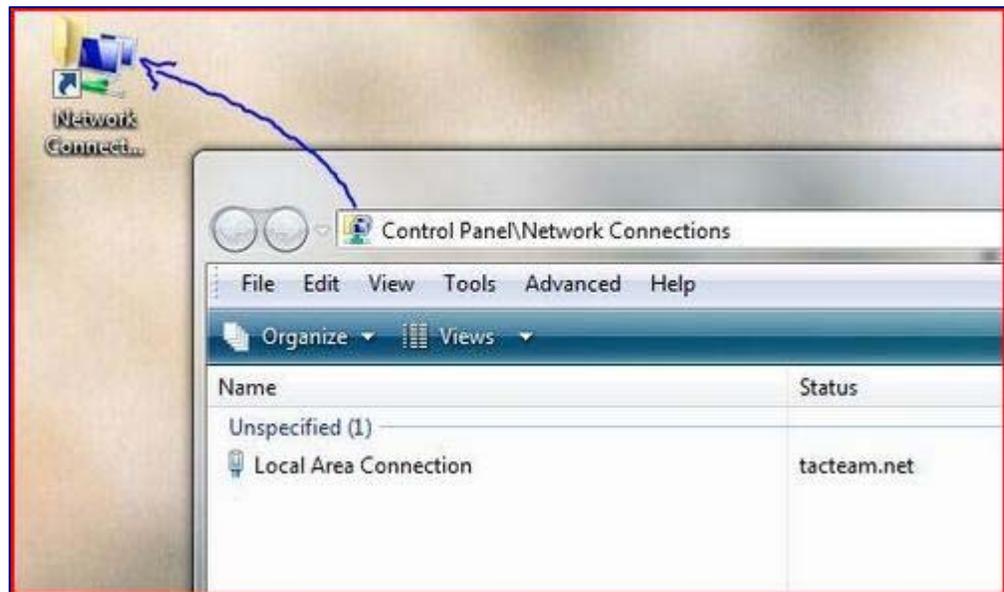

Figure L: To work around the extra click requirement, just make a shortcut on the desktop.

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